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A FEW FORMULÆ USED IN SURGICAL NURSING

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On a number of occasions nurses have asked me for formulæ to fulfil various indications met with in surgical practice, and I here present at random a few of them that may be of help.

One of the most distressing conditions to meet is a case of inoperable cancer, more particularly on account of the very offensive odor of the secretions, which clings to the hands of those who change the dressings. To remove this odor the following prescription will be found of great value:

℞ Terebene,
Olive oil, equal parts.
Rub freely on the hands and remove with soap and water.

Oftentimes a good stimulating enema is required to combat collapsus following hemorrhage or a surgical operation. The following may be used to advantage:

℞ Powdered camphor, grs. viii;
Tincture digitalis, gtts. xx;
Yolk of one egg;
Distilled water, ℥vii;
Tinct. opii, gtts. x.
For an enema.

Children take medicine with difficulty unless palatable, and when necessary to clear the bowels before or after an operation castor-oil is by far the best. The following prescription will be taken by any child without protest:

℞ Castor-oil, ʒi;
Syrup of senna,
Syrup of lemon, āā ℥ii.
For one dose.

When the bowels do not respond to medicines taken by mouth after laparotomy, or when ordinary enemas do not have effect, the following enema will usually overcome the difficulty:

℞ Turpentine, ℥ss;
Saturated solution of epsom salts,
Water, āā ℥viii;
Glycerin, ℥i.
For a high enema.

To control post-partum hemorrhage, nose-bleeding, or hemorrhage from wounds there is nothing superior to gelatine used as follows:

℞ Chloride of soda,
Gelatin, āā ʒ vi;
Water, 1 quart.

If the hemorrhage comes from surface wounds, pack the wound with sterile gauze soaked in this solution. In post-partum hemorrhage use the solution as an intra-uterine irrigation.

A very good surgical soap is to be made of

Oil of sweet almonds, 72 parts;
Lye of soda, 24 parts;
Lye of potash, 12 parts;
Sulphocarbolate of zinc, 2 parts;
Oil of wintergreen, 9.5 parts.

As an antiseptic dusting-powder to wounds which is odorless and non-toxic, subgallate of bismuth has no equal.

Many patients, especially elderly people, have intense itching of the skin when they are confined to bed, which is called pruritus. The following prescriptions will relieve this unpleasant condition very nicely:

℞ Menthol,
Oxide of zinc, āā 1 part;
Powdered starch,
Powdered talcum, āā 15 parts.
A dusting powder.

Or:

℞ Hyposulphite of soda, ℥ i;
Carbolic acid, ʒ i;
Glycerin, ℥ ss;
Distilled water, 1 pint.
Apply freely to parts with gentle friction.